

ADDITIONAL VIEWS OF THE HON. ALAN B. MOLLOHAN

The appropriations bill for the Science, State, Justice, Commerce and Related Agencies reported by the Committee reflects a sincere effort by a capable subcommittee Chairman to put together a good bill in the face of some large reductions and legislative proposals in the President's request. The Subcommittee Chairman consulted with the minority throughout this process and the bill reflects our views and recommendations in many areas.

While this is a good bill and the Chairman engaged in a fair and open process, I am concerned about the effects of reduced resources over the past several years on our states and our local communities. The Chairman has restored about a billion dollars over the President's cuts to state and local law enforcement, but the bill is still about \$400 million below last year's level. The Chairman has also restored \$200 million to the Economic Development Administration's grant program, which was eliminated in the President's 2006 proposal. However, that number is a little more than two-thirds the level that it was last year.

Several smaller programs that are of importance to Members and their communities were not funded including the Public Telecommunications Facilities and Planning account and the Advanced Technology Partnership program.

There are many positive aspects to this bill. The FBI received \$50 million above the President's request, including funding for drug agents that the President proposed to transfer into Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force. The Drug Enforcement Administration and the Marshals Service are both funded above the President's request and the bill rejects the President's proposals to impose a new tax on the explosives industry by the imposition of various fees, and to transfer responsibility and reduce funding for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Program.

I am pleased that this bill rejects the Administration's "Strengthening America's Communities" initiative proposed to be established in the Department of Commerce. The Chairman has restored the Manufacturing Extension Partnership program to \$106 million, almost \$60 million above the President's request. An increase of \$200 million above last year's House bill was provided for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, but NOAA is still \$150 million below the President's 2006 request.

The bill retains \$15 million in the Steel Loan Guarantee program, despite the President's request to rescind all funding. This program has been an important aid to the domestic steel industry and I will continue to argue for even more funding in conference.

I am concerned that NASA is moving forward with fundamental changes to the mission, capital, and organization without the benefit of an authorization and a robust hearing process that such an authorization would entail. I am concerned about the general lack of information provided by NASA and presented in the fiscal year 2006 justification. Some of the yet to be answered questions include: the number of shuttle flights remaining, the

final configurations of the International Space Station, the type of research to be conducted on the space station, what type of propulsion technologies and what types of activities will take place when we return to the Moon. Other ill-defined activities surround the Moon-Mars proposal, including the specifics of the Crew Exploration Vehicle.

One priority in the science field that has been threatened during implementation of the Moon-Mars proposal is the Hubble Servicing Mission. Like many others in Congress, in the public, and in the science community, I am encouraged that Administrator Griffin intends to reassess a Hubble servicing mission. Hubble has been one of the world's premier scientific instruments for more than a decade, and a servicing mission can dramatically enhance and extend this valuable asset.

While I am glad to see that the Chairman restored some of the monies for the science and aeronautics programs at NASA, I am concerned that crucial science and aeronautics programs are being reduced, deferred, and ultimately will wither. The science account, including programs such as solar system exploration, universe exploration, and the earth-sun system would receive less than a one percent increase under this budget proposal – yet most of the recent successes have come from these programs.

The Chairman did restore many of the cuts proposed by the President in the 2006 budget for the National Science Foundation, yet we are far behind the numbers advocated by the science community and the so-called “doubling bill” passed by the authorizing committee several years ago.

For the State Department, I am pleased that the bill provides \$410 million for educational and cultural exchanges, an increase of \$54.5 million, and increases funding for public diplomacy programs to \$340 million. Worldwide security activities for the State Department and embassy security upgrades are fully funded. The bill fully funds international peacekeeping efforts but requires that appropriate procedures are in place to sanction misconduct before any new peacekeeping operations are undertaken.

Within the Small Business Administration, I was pleased to see that the Chairman chose to restore funding for the microloan program which had been zeroed out in the President's budget, although the bill's proposed funding level of \$10 million only partially restores this program.

I support the bill and applaud the subcommittee Chairman whose strong values and vision are so well reflected in this measure.